

## ***PRESS RELEASE***

For Immediate Release  
September 26, 2005

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### **FAYETTE COUNTY GRAND JURY INDICTS WOMAN FOR WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD**

**CHARLESTON, WV** – West Virginia Insurance Commissioner, Jane L. Cline, announced today that Karen Manley Richards was indicted earlier this month by a Fayette County Grand Jury on the felony offense of Workers' Compensation Fraud.

Richards is charged with fraudulently cashing dependent benefit checks received in the claim of her deceased husband. Richards' dependency claim was terminated in 2004; however, she continued to cash the benefit checks through January of 2005.

"The Workers' Compensation Fund provides benefits to a deceased worker's dependent widow when a work-related injury causes disability which continues until the worker's death" Cline said. "Such benefits are in the same amount that was or would have been paid to the deceased worker for total disability had he or she lived. Benefits cease however, upon the widow's death or remarriage."

Persons who fraudulently secure benefits from the Workers' Compensation Fund, or who file false reports or give false testimony are subject to criminal prosecution. Employers may also be prosecuted for failure to make timely and accurate reports and payments. Penalties include fines of up to ten thousand dollars, and/or imprisonment for up to ten years, depending on the charge.

The indictment against Mrs. Richards is the result of a joint effort by Fayette County Prosecuting Attorney Carl Harris and the West Virginia Insurance Commission.

Anyone with information relating to a suspected case of Workers' Compensation fraud is urged to call, toll-free, 1-888-372-8392.

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